

## **Notes from the UFF Promotion Workshop, April, 2005**

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The *Collective Bargaining Agreement* is in effect at FIU even though the University is refusing to accept grievances at this time. Despite its refusal, you should contact UFF's Grievance Chair, Bruce Harvey, if the administration violates any part of the *Agreement*.

Promotion to Full Professor is a slippery business. During my most recent terms on the College of Arts and Sciences Tenure and Promotion Committee, there were all too many cases where one level overturned the decision of the lower level, e.g., department *yes*, T & P Committee *no*, Dean *yes*, Provost *no*, and various permutations and combinations thereof. The promotion process seemed less than rational.

Of course the utter superstars have no problem with the process and those with very weak academic records have no chance. It's that large cohort in the middle who worry and struggle—and that of course includes most of us. But there are things you can do to maximize your chances.

1. Be sure you understand **departmental and college standards**. If you don't have the support of your department and college/school, you will probably have problems with your dean and the Provost. Because promotion to Full includes all of your work from promotion to Associate, you need to understand the standards early on. They shift over time (sometimes abruptly) but you need to start laying the groundwork as soon as you are tenured. Learn the relative importance of books, articles, grants, teaching, service, and academic leadership. Talk to people who've been through the process, talk to your chair, talk to people who have served on your department and college tenure and promotion committees. That's one way to keep abreast of shifting standards.
2. There must be **published criteria** for promotion and you must be given a copy of them. If they change, the new criteria cannot be put into effect for one year. [This right is laid out in Article 14 of the *Collective Bargaining Agreement*]. However, criteria are typically couched in terms of excellence, meritorious performance, etc., so they are rather subjective and not especially useful.
3. Your **annual evaluations** will be included in your promotion file. Pay attention to them. Your evaluations must be based on your assigned duties (Article 10 of the *Collective Bargaining Agreement*). If you have a heavy teaching load and a small research assignment, you should be evaluated accordingly. If you are not, talk to your chair and ask that the evaluation be changed to reflect your assignment. If you get no satisfaction from the chair, contact UFF. If your chair notes deficiencies in your performance, you have the right to request help in correcting them. If there are inaccuracies in the evaluation, the evaluation must be corrected. Request a revised evaluation immediately. If the Chair refuses, contact UFF.
4. You have the right to request **promotion appraisals** (i.e., an evaluation of your

progress toward promotion to Full Professor). It's a separate component of the annual evaluation. Appraisals are not binding on the University.

5. Pay close attention to your **assignment of responsibilities**. This is extremely important. Article 9 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement guarantees you the opportunity to fulfill applicable criteria for promotion. If research is a significant criterion for promotion and you have an annual six course load while others teach four or five, Article 9 has been violated. This is a serious problem in certain units. Some departments do have differential teaching assignments and the requirement is that those with heavy teaching loads will be evaluated on the basis of that assignment. However, a heavy teaching load with good teaching will not get you promoted. (It probably won't get you a discretionary raise either although sometimes faculty accept heavy teaching loads with this expectation.) If you hope to become a Full Professor, don't accept a heavy teaching load. There's a catch 22 if you already have a heavy load—it's hard to convince anyone to lower it so you can do research, when you haven't had the time prove that you can do research. It's best to negotiate a reasonable teaching load at the outset and do enough research (get enough grants, etc.) to maintain it. In some units heavy teaching loads are imposed and faculty are still required to do significant research. The grievance process is the only way to break this cycle.

6. Monitor your **evaluation file** (the one in the department or dean's office. Make sure it is complete (annual evaluations, teaching evaluations, etc.) This is especially important if you've had arguments with your chair or the dean, if you're a whistle blower, or if there's any other reason that someone might consider you a pain in the butt. You have the right to see your file and have anything that is contrary to fact removed (Article 11). You have the right to attach a concise statement to anything in the file. Sometimes faculty paginate their files, so they will know if something's been added without their knowledge.

7. You have the right to review your promotion file before it goes forward. Be sure you do this. You have the right to attach a brief response to any material in it.

There are two kinds of **deadlines** associated with the promotion process—those imposed by the University's internal tenure and promotion policies and those in the *Collective Bargaining Agreement*. The University's internal deadlines are meaningless.. As of April 22, the faculty of Arts and Sciences has just received notification letters from their dean and, needless to say, had not yet heard from the Provost.

However, the deadlines imposed by the *Collective Bargaining Agreement* must be followed. If anything is added to your file as it goes forward, a copy of that item must be sent to you within 5 days. You can attach a response within 5 days of your receipt of the copy (Article 14). This includes documents like the vote of the department, the letter from your chair, the vote & letter of the Tenure and Promotion Committee etc. If you receive a negative decision at any stage in the process, you can send your file forward, send it forward with a response to the negative document, or withdraw from the process.

All faculty at the rank of Associate Professor or above receive Sustained Performance Evaluations (Article 10 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement). This process is better known

as Post-tenure Review. A faculty member who has received satisfactory **annual evaluations** over the past six years must receive a satisfactory sustained performance evaluation. (If a faculty member has not received satisfactory evaluations, a performance improvement plan will be developed.) Anyone who receives an unsatisfactory Sustained Performance Evaluation will have trouble being promoted. This is another example of the importance of annual evaluations.

Should you decide to go through the promotion process, UFF wishes you smooth sailing.